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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

NEW TREATMENT FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS.—Dr. Roy Bernard of Chicago, writing in the *Medical Record*, advocates the use of a simple suspension apparatus, which is illustrated, in the restoration of function after infantile paralysis. When the upper extremities are involved, the suspension ring is placed directly over the cervical enlargement of the spine, at the junction of the fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae. When the lower limbs are affected, it is placed over the dorsal enlargement, at the juncture of the eleventh and twelfth. The patient is swung back and forth for about three minutes. This induces a local hyperemia which has a nutritive effect on the cells, and if they have not entirely degenerated produces astonishing results.

TREATMENT OF WOUNDS WITH BEEF SERUM.—The *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* mentions a series of experiments in treating infected wounds, cellulitis, acute osteomyelitis, septic ulcers, burns and skin grafts, by the use of beef serum. The conclusion is that serum will control a septic process wherever contact is made between the serum dressing and the infected tissue. It is absolutely harmless to normal tissue. As a prophylactic agent in fresh wounds it is of value. Serum is a most marked stimulant of granulation. Grafting can and should be practiced earlier, following the use of serum, than under any other agent. Injections of unheated beef serum are followed by rise in temperature, usually slight, perhaps with chill, but the reactions are short and not severe. Used as a dressing to wounds, even large surfaces, it gives rise to no anaphylactic response.

COLD AIR IN PNEUMONIA IN INFANCY.—A writer in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* says that both infants and young children stand cold very badly. Some infants grow cyanosed and the whole system is depressed. Fresh air at a temperature not uncomfortable to the nurse is the correct procedure. If the incoming air passes over a warm radiator it is probably the ideal condition. Cold is not specific in the treatment of pneumonia, certainly not cold air.

CESAREAN SECTION.—A writer in the *Medical Record* enters a plea for the more frequent performance of Cesarean section in a certain class of cases. In clean, uncomplicated cases the mortality is given at 2 per cent. Contracted or deformed pelvis, eclampsia and toxemia of pregnancy, with convulsions at term with rigid cervix; then placenta prævia with central implantation, tumor, or ruptured uterus during labor, are the most common indications. A high forceps operation is injurious to both mother and child, breech extractions are especially dangerous to the infant. If

craniotomy is necessary, the child's rights demand a Cesarean section and in other cases the mother is spared hours of untold suffering and the possibility of serious injury to the head of the child, affecting its mentality later.

FLIES AND LIGHT.—A French medical journal states that flies apparently see only white light. All the rays from green to orange appear to them as darkness. In a room lighted through pale blue glass they seemed to perceive nothing and they avoid rooms lighted through stained glass as if they were dark.

DYSPEPSIA DUE TO HOT FOOD.—The same journal expresses the opinion that a very large proportion of cases of dyspepsia are brought on and perpetuated by the habit of taking food and liquids too hot for the tissues to bear uninjured. Hot soups, tea, etc., taken on an empty stomach are particularly injurious. The hot fluid passes so rapidly through the mouth that the buccal tissues are not harmed. When the habit is overcome, dyspepsia arising from this cause improves markedly.

TREATMENT FOR BURNS.—A Buenos Aires medical journal states that a 10 to 15 per cent ichthyolized petrolatum has been successfully used in the treatment of burns. The dressings do not stick to the tissues and the remedy has great analgesic and healing powers.

WAR AND HEALTH.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* quoting from *The Survey*, says the problems of tuberculosis, venereal disease, insanity, and recreation, which, even with all our highly intelligent and energetic propaganda, have hitherto interested only a handful of specialists, comparatively speaking, have suddenly become the common concern of all the branches of the federal and state governments which have anything to do with the fighting forces, and of everybody who has a son, or brother, or sweetheart, or even a mere acquaintance in khaki, or serge, or linen. The prospects are that the American soldier will be the most "protected" and best cared for individual that the world has ever seen, and that there will be protection and care left over for at least a part of the civil population.

MANAGEMENT OF BEDSORES.—The *Medical Record* has an article describing the methods used in the prevention and management of decubitus at the Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn, N. Y. Cleanliness, involving the prompt removal of any discharge, and change of position at least every half hour, day and night, are insisted upon. For local preventive treatment, the alternate application of heat and cold is advised, repeated as many times a day as is necessary. If the ulcerative stage is reached, a one-half per cent solution of the usual 40 per cent solution of formaldehyde, applied with a syringe, is recommended, the nurses' hands being protected. In the intervals of cleansing, the surface is dusted with subiodide of bismuth, to make a protective, absorbent, antiseptic layer

everywhere over the area. The dressing is repeated as often as is necessary for cleanliness.

CONTROL OF NARCOTICS.—As a result of recent disclosures in reference to the criminal drug traffic in New York the Federal Grand Jury has recommended that the entire manufacture and sale of opium, heroin, morphine and other narcotics be placed under the direct control of the Federal Government, which shall regulate prices, exports and imports.

DRAFTS.—In a paper on another subject in the *Medical Record*, the writer says drafts are only dangerous to the individual when he has perspired and the pores of the skin are open, at all other times drafts are beneficial, since air currents tend to purify the atmosphere. Colds are never contracted from drafts, but are due to infection, just as much as tuberculosis, for all gripes and colds are due to specific organisms. The germ of the former is the Pfeiffer bacillus and the latter is known as the bacillus of catarrh. They are spread in close and badly ventilated rooms by infected persons coughing into the air. Sleeping with the window open at night in winter and summer is highly recommended.

MOSS AS A DRESSING.—Sphagnum, or peat moss, which grows in large quantities in the state of Washington, is being cleaned and dried for Red Cross use. It is very light and easily shipped. The Germans have been using it on fresh wounds as a substitute for cotton, and say that it absorbs from seven to ten times its own weight in liquid, while cotton absorbs only six times its weight.

EFFECT OF HIGH COST OF DRINKING.—It is stated that the City Hospital of St. Louis was recently without a patient in the alcoholic ward and no patient had been sent in for treatment during a period of over forty-eight hours. The daily average during the last year has been about fifteen, with a record of forty-five. The shortage of patients is attributed solely to the high cost of liquor.

RESULTS OF BARE NECKS.—The *Medical Record*, quoting from a foreign contemporary, says as the result of going bare-chested for three years, women have developed an integument of very peculiar texture, with diffuse and lenticular pigmentation, telangiectasis (enlargement of capillaries), coarsening of the skin, keratosis of the follicles, and acne. The resistance of the skin to disease is also much lowered.